

# Researching Children

2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on  
Research with and by Children



10 -12 December 2007  
SOS Children's Villages  
Hermann Gmeiner Academy, Innsbruck

## Conference Booklet Program





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## PROGRAM

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| 08:00 | <b>Registration</b>   |
| 09:00 | <b>Inaugural Speech:</b><br><b>Christian Honold and Julia Fiedler</b>   |
| 09:30 | <b>Key note: Ros Frost:</b> The HCD Student Partnership: Learning from young leaders of research  |
| 10:30 | <b>Break</b>  |
| 11:00 | <b>Andrea Wheeler:</b> Negotiation between excessive consumption and an ethic: Sustainable schools and sustainable behavior<br><b>Rita Bertozzi:</b> Research with and by Migrant Children in Rome<br><b>Maria Martinez and Jorge Fernandez del Valle:</b> Children and young people's satisfaction in residential child care |
| 11.45 | <b>Tina Moules:</b> Participatory research with children and young people: A framework for practice<br><b>Malay Dewanji:</b> Shishu Jagat – Action research by the children at risk themselves  |
| 12.30 | <b>Lunch</b>  |
| 13:30 | <b>Stuart Bevins and Merisa Thompson:</b> Climate Change Reporters<br><b>Xavier Moonen:</b> Research with young people admitted to remedial treatment centres for young people with mild intellectual disabilities<br><b>Yvonne Vissing:</b> Impact of housing distress from a child's perspective                            |
| 14.15 | <b>Kitty Jurrius:</b> Perspective taking through PAR with youth<br><b>Thomas Müller:</b> A call for the future – child participation<br><b>Margaret Wood:</b> Young people as researchers   |
| 15.00 | <b>Break</b>  |
| 15:30 | <b>Sirene Lim:</b> Researching with 4-5-year-olds: Whos voice? Who benefits?<br><b>Susanne Vogl:</b> Focus Groups with Children<br><b>Anne Holdik and Esther Burgard:</b> Becoming independent – Youth's reflections on fledging ( <b>Workshop Youth only!</b> )  |

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| 16.15 | <p><b>Claudia Mödlagl:</b> Listening to children: Baking our strategy for 2009-2016</p> <p><b>Ruth Karner (Workshop):</b> Let's play: Interactive demonstration of methods for workshops with children and adults.</p> <p><b>Anne Holdik and Esther Burgard:</b> Becoming independent – Youth's reflections on fledging <b>(Workshop Youth only!)</b></p> |
| 17.00 | <b>End</b>  |
| 18:00 | <b>Welcome Dinner Landhaus and HGA</b>  |

### Tuesday 11.12.2007

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| 09:00 | <b>Key note: Peter Egg:</b> Research Happens - I Have a Dream   |
| 10:00 | <p><b>Clare Goodman:</b> Disabled children's experiences of hip surgery: How do we find out what children have to say?</p> <p><b>Werner Reichmann, Bianca Helfer, Sonja Eugen:</b> Child Protection: Involving Children as Competent Partners in Investigating Their Safety</p> <p><b>Pullen Joseph Lolichen:</b> Children as research protagonists and partners in mainstream governance</p> |
| 10.45 | <b>Break</b>  |
| 11:00 | <p><b>Sue Lyle, Aileen Brindley:</b> Listening to pupil voice: the experiences of teachers working with ten year old pupils in South Wales, UK</p> <p><b>Jenni Karlsson:</b> On the way to school: children in the post-apartheid city</p> <p><b>Vickie Fraizer-Morris:</b> Just ask! ...and you'll see our ability – Part 1</p>  |
| 11.45 | <p><b>Debbie Kramer-Roy:</b> Involving Children in a Participatory Action Research Project studying the support needs of Pakistani families with disabled children</p> <p><b>Maggie Mc Cutcheon:</b> Participation of children and youth in public decision making in the UK</p> <p><b>Vickie Fraizer-Morris:</b> Just ask! ...and you'll see our ability – Part 2</p>                        |
| 12.30 | <b>Lunch</b>  |
| 14.00 | <p><b>Oscar Germes (Workshop):</b> Storytelling as a narrative method for the development of quality standards in out-of-home child care</p> <p><b>Andy Simpson (Workshop):</b> Young people using action research to tell their stories</p> <p><b>Fiet van Beek and Jorien Meerdink (Workshop):</b> Listening to Children as a</p>   |

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|              | Basis for Quality   |
| <b>16.00</b> | <b>Break</b>  |
| <b>16.30</b> | <p><b>Hannah Smith:</b> The challenges of conducting research with young people: evidence from Liverpool longitudinal smoking study</p> <p><b>Yvonne Vissing:</b> Listening to children in divorce and custody cases</p> <p><b>Oscar Germes (Workshop, Part two):</b> Storytelling as a narrative method for the development of quality standards in out-of-home child care</p> |
| <b>17.15</b> | <b>End</b>  |

**Wednesday 12.12.2007**

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| <b>09:00</b> | <p><b>YOUTH's Morning</b></p> <p><b>Hannah Minty:</b> Connexions</p> <p><b>Akademisches Gymnasium:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Muslims in Austria</li> <li>- Young people and politics</li> <li>- Environmental problems</li> </ul> <p><b>Westfield Community Technology College</b></p> |
| <b>10.30</b> | <b>Break</b>  |
| <b>11.00</b> | <p><b>Akademisches Gymnasium:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ideal of beauty</li> <li>- Sports</li> </ul>   |
| <b>12.30</b> | <b>Closing remarks and farewell</b>   |
| <b>13.00</b> | <b>Lunch</b>  |

**Monday 10.12.2007****Ms Ros Frost, University of Cambridge, UK****The HCD Student Partnership: Learning from young leaders of research**

Increasingly children and young people are engaging in school-based research as well as taking on a range of leadership responsibilities in English schools. This paper reports on a collaborative project involving the HCD Student Partnership at the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education, Save the Children UK, Hertfordshire education authority in England, one primary school, one secondary school and an educational support centre for young people who have been excluded from school.

A central aim of the project was to support the sustainable development of young researchers within a range of school settings, as well as provide a space for researchers of all ages to engage in dialogue about research. Initially teachers were trained to develop a small group of young researchers in their school. This group of student researchers were then supported by their teachers as they developed a small group of their peers as researchers. This paper reflects on the learning gained from the overall project but focuses particularly on the benefits and challenges experienced by students as they developed their peers as researchers.

**Biography**

Ros Frost has been a member of the Leadership for Learning team led by Professor John MacBeath at the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education since July 2006. Prior to this she was a primary school headteacher in England with a passion for developing authentic participation strategies for students in schools. She now leads children's and adults' research development activity for the HCD Student Partnership at the Faculty of Education as well as wider work relating to participation in schools. She has recently presented papers at national and international education conferences relating to her work with seven- and eight-year-old and eleven- to eighteen-year-old researchers. She is also undertaking doctoral study in the area of three- to seven-year-old researchers. Ros has published work in the fields of developing young researchers, assessment in primary schools, innovative practitioner research and ethics and values in inclusive education.



**Ms Andrea Wheeler, RCUK/ESRC Interdisciplinary Research Fellow,  
The University of Nottingham, United Kingdom**

**Sustainable Schools and Sustainable Behaviour**

What are young people's attitudes towards sustainable development? Do young people think that sustainable behaviour and lifestyle change should be part of the school agenda? How do young people understand environmental issues? In the context of "one planet living" can they understand the need for reduced consumption and do they think these ideas are appropriate to them? Preliminary work with young people in areas of low educational achievement and deprivation in the UK showed that whilst they thought responding to the problem of global warming in the context of school building was important for the future, and for their own children, it was not as important as schools providing good education and good teachers. Immediate issues concerning improving the local environment were of more concern. But what happens if young people themselves are involved in exploring what a sustainable community could mean and in designing sustainable schools. What happens if they believe they will be listened to? Does involving children in co-design processes suggest different ideas, different responses to environmental issues? This presentation looks at the design work of small groups of mixed ability young people aged 11-15 asked to plan their new school buildings and design new learning spaces. It describes the difference between answers provided in interview, and conversations within the group whilst engaged in design decision making. It illustrates through the drawings and discussions of the children their needs and criticisms of their school day. Whilst it is often only "gifted and talented" children that are involved with such consultation events, it is also noteworthy that there were both very different concerns and design approaches by some of the special needs children within the group. The UK Government is involved in a massive programme of school renovation and rebuilding. According to government literature new schools will transform learning and embed sustainable behaviour into the life experience of young people, but perhaps young people have some ideas that could improve the effectiveness of such policy. Perhaps they already have some understanding in the change in ethics, behaviour and lifestyle change that will be needed to adapt to the environment and social changes global warming will bring.

**Biography**

Andrea Wheeler is an Early Careers Interdisciplinary Research Fellow working in the Schools of Education and Built Environment at the University of Nottingham, UK. Her work is part of a three year ESRC funded research project: How Can We Design Schools As Better Learning Spaces and To Encourage Sustainable Behaviour? Co-Design Methodologies and Sustainable Communities addressing a key strategic gap within the current portfolio of the Research Council Energy programme relating to research carried out within the Towards a Sustainable Energy Economy initiative.

## **Ms Rita Bertozzi, Save the Children Italy, Italy**

### **Research with and by Migrant Children in Rome - Save the Children Italy**

In the framework of a survey project on the labour of foreign children in Italy, Save the Children Italy decided to conduct its part of the research on child labour in Rome involving actively a group of foreign girls and boys as “peer researchers”.

Focusing on the importance of children participation and the enhancement of the viewpoint in trying to identify meanings and characteristics labour may have for their coevals, and after a first stage of training on survey methodologies, the teenager group was involved in the elaboration of the survey project, defined survey methodologies, elements to be investigated and subjects to be interviewed.

Peer researchers eventually collected information by interviewing about sixty coevals and discussed the collected data with adults who accompanied the whole process. The way of disseminating results was decided together with children, elaborating a child-friendly document including a presentation children made on the work they carried out.

The active participation by children in the survey entailed several challenges and questions, offering stimulating reflection areas. The setting of flexible working methods, able to follow both the survey evolution and personal needs and paths of children involved as “peer researchers”, enabled to build the research path while researching and to adapt it depending on the resources of the subjects.

The experience made has, moreover, favoured among kids a process of empowerment and support to self-confidence and the enhancement of their knowledge, in a view of proposal and project exchange with adults.

### **Biography**

Rita Bertozzi, PhD in Sociology. Lecturer in Sociology of Education, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy, and Researcher for Save the Children Italy.

**Ms María Martínez & Mr Jorge Fernández del Valle, University of Oviedo, Spain**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SATISFACTION IN RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE**

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was ratified in Spain in 1990 and the Spanish Child Care System is ruled by its principles. Despite the recognition of the children's opinions value, few studies have been carried out to discover children's satisfaction regarding the care they receive. However, international research results are rather positive and most children appear to be generally satisfied with residential care services.

The aim of this paper is to show the results from research about children and young people's satisfaction in residential child care. Data was gathered from evaluations of several residential programs in the context of a large project research about Quality Evaluation in Residential Care carried out by the Child and Family Research Group of the University of Oviedo.

Data was collected by means of a semi-structured interview, including 44 quantitative items organized in eight scales, and eight qualitative items. Scales include contents such as home and room facilities, social climate among peers, organization and rules, basic care (food, clothes, etc.), school, relationship with residential workers, etc. Results were analyzed according to gender and age. The sample is made up of 241 children, 141 boys (55.2%) and 108 girls (44.8%), aged from 9 to 20 years old ( $M = 14.17$   $SD = 2.57$ ). The Findings were congruent with international research, where children showed a high satisfaction with their residential program and with their care workers. A significant difference was found by gender with boys being more satisfied than girls. Age also showed a significant difference, as satisfaction tended to decrease with age.

The Spanish Protection System is governed by principles of The United Nations Convention (1989) (ratified in 1990), where children's rights are recognized. For this reason children's and young people's opinions and points of view are fundamental not only in their personal lives but in the development of social policies as well. Nonetheless, in the last few years public and private institutions, like SOS Children's Villages, have felt the need to improve the residential attention quality by requesting evaluations of their programmes from our team. In this evaluation children's and young people's points of view are significant.

## **Ms Tina Moules, Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom**

### **Participatory research with children and young people: a Framework for Practice.**

This study set out to use a participatory approach to explore how children and young people could be involved in monitoring the quality of care in hospital. In Phase 1 of the study 9 young people, who had been inpatients, were recruited from a local school and interviewed about their experiences. In Phase 2, the young people formed the research group and worked with me to collect data from a total of 129 children and young people aged between 9 and 14. The research group then worked together to analyse data using Framework analysis.

An analysis of the participatory process led me to develop a framework of participation for use in participatory projects with children and young people. The framework starts from the position that 'participation' is happening and is planned, and sets out to give some structure to the different ways in which the adult researcher(s) and children/young people can work together to achieve the aims of the research project. It differs from other models in that it does not offer varying levels of participation, which often depict the varying roles that adults play in relation to children's participation. Rather, it conveys four different types of participation, all of which can be seen to occur at different times and to different degrees within one project, and focuses on the roles played by both children/young people and adults in the participatory process. The framework proposes that 'participation' in participatory research can be usefully conceptualised in terms of the degree to which children and young people (both as individuals and as a group) make decisions, initiate action and direct the project. The framework acknowledges that, within a participatory research project, the balance of decision-making, control and initiation can shift between the adult and the young people whilst still maintaining a collaborative partnership.

### **Biography**

I trained as a Sick Children's Nurse and General Nurse in Manchester. After some years in clinical practice I moved into teaching and in 1984 I took up the post of Senior Tutor at Great Ormond Street Hospital where I stayed for 10 years. Since then I have been working at Anglia Ruskin University, first as Head of Division of Childhood Studies and latterly as Director of Research.

## **Mr Malay Dewanji, Liberal Association for Movement of People and FICE-India, India**

### **“SHISHU JAGAT”— ACTION RESEARCH BY THE CHILDREN AT RISK THEMSELVES.**

Shishu Jagat (literal translation in English is Children's World) is the Network of the Organisations of the Children at risks , especially Street and Working Children, Children of Commercial Sex Workers; Children affected and effected by HIV/AIDS, Children of Leprosy-sufferers and other marginalized communities etc., formed by the Children at risk themselves, through their own Parliament, held in 2002. The Vision of this Network is to attain One Free Democratic World in which all Children of the World, irrespective of caste, class, creed, religion, nationality, gender will enjoy equal opportunities for developing themselves as full human beings.

With this vision , the “Shishu Jagat” has formulated its mission of empowering the Children at risks, the most oppressed and exploited sections of the Children community, through their own grassroots level organizations and action programmes. This empowerment process is considered as the action research undertaken under the leadership of the Children at risk themselves, for their own empowerment.

Liberal Association for Movement of People(LAMP) , a national award winning NGO of India, deeply involved with these above-mentioned groups of children in different cities and rural areas of India, has been successfully initiating and practicing these children's full participation in the form of their leadership to all the decision-making processes related with their integrated development and empowerment.

Thus LAMP has been successfully practicing developmental method of ensuring children's full participation and leadership in their situational analysis, care and development programmes, under the leadership of the “Shishu Jagat”. The promise of Children's active participation and leadership in undertaking their situational analysis, integrated development and empowerment, facilitated by the LAMP, has been successfully creating socio-educational, cultural and political space for the Children at risks, which may be replicated anywhere in the World.

### **Biography**

MALAY DEWANJI , B.Sc.; B.A. (Economics), M.A. (Sociology), M.Phil(Sociology), is the founder General Secretary of the Liberal Association for Movement of People (LAMP), full member of the FICE (Federation Internationale Des Communities Educative). Malay Dewanji has also established the Network of grassroots level organizations of the Children at risk ( Street and Working Children, Children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS,... ), under the name of “Shishu Jagat”. Publications on people's empowerment and children's rights, development and empowerment and public administration. International scientific working stays. Secretary General of the All India Association of Voluntary Agencies.

## **Mr Stuart Bevins & Ms Merisa Thompson, Centre For Science Education, Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom**

### **Climate Change Reporters**

The Centre for Science Education (CSE) is one of the UK's foremost research and development groups working in science education. Amongst a wide portfolio, the work of CSE includes leading edge continuing professional development for teachers, research with children into perceptions, attitudes and attainment in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, curriculum development and, the creation of motivating and innovative science intervention schemes. This paper reports on the findings of a pilot action research project investigating UK secondary school students' perceptions and understanding of climate change. Four groups of students, aged 14 to 15 years old, from a secondary school in the north of England were identified to participate in the study. The students involved in the project were asked to act as climate change reporters using video to visually record their findings. University researchers worked with the students to brainstorm ideas and perceptions of issues surrounding climate change and the environment. Drawing on the ideas and issues raised, each group of students developed a short interview schedule to be used whilst investigating the views of their peers. Using the medium of video meant that the data could be used as a basis for the researchers to reflect on findings with the students. Students and University researchers could therefore collaborate closely to analyse the data through a grounded theory approach, constructing analytic categories to organise emerging themes. Although the project was on a small scale, the data gathered from the brainstorming activity, video reports and analysis workshop provided a useful snap shot of how young people understand and feel about climate change. The action research approach enabled students to take on the role of investigator when interviewing their peers and to offer a voice for both themselves and their peers.

### **Biography**

Dr Stuart Bevins is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Science Education, Sheffield Hallam University, UK. He is module leader for the MA in Learning and Teaching and is the regional Director for the Nuffield Science Bursary scheme. His research interests are social learning theories and professional expertise.

### **Biography**

Merisa Thompson is a Researcher at the Centre for Science Education, Sheffield Hallam University, UK. She is leading the research team on the Cre8ate Maths for schools project and is currently managing the development of environment and science/history cross curricular activities for pupils aged 10-14. Her research interests lie in young people's active participation, personal skills and capabilities and the environment

## **Mr Xavier Moonen, Koraal Groep, Netherlands**

### **Research with young people admitted to remedial treatment centres for young people with mild intellectual disabilities**

In the Netherlands there is an increasing number of young people with (mild) intellectual disabilities referred for residential help from a specialized remedial treatment centre. In two studies we tried to find out what young people with a mild intellectual disability think about their treatment in a remedial treatment centre.

In the first study, young people (age 12-18 years) with an intellectual developmental disorder collaborated in this study as research assistants, in focus groups, by conducting peer interviews and as respondents.

In cooperation with the young people a questionnaire was developed that was used in individual peer interviews among 21 young people.

Parents, therapists and assigned group workers, who work every day with the young people, were asked in a parallel individual interview, how they thought that the young people judged their stay and therapy in the residential treatment centre and what ideas the young people would have about their future life.

All interviews were taped and afterwards analysed using Maxqda.

The young people had a great variety of experiences concerning their stay in the residential facility.

Parents and therapists had a reasonable idea of the overall view of the young people. Assigned group workers had no real idea what answers the young people would give. But if we look closer at the similarities in the answers to the questions on the diverse topics then only a slight to moderate similarity can be seen for all three categories of informants.

In a second study with young people (age 6-14) with an intellectual developmental disorder collaborated in this study in focus groups, in a photo-project and as respondents. With the help of the young people the questionnaire was developed. Trained interviewers then interviewed 50 children. We are still analyzing the data (October 2007), and I will present first results at the conference.

This studies demonstrate that young people with intellectual disabilities are capable to participate in the research methods used.

In the presentation I would like to discuss advantages and pitfalls when working together with young people with a (mild) mental handicap.

### **Biography**

Xavier Moonen PhD (53 year) is special psychologist and is working as a researcher and consultant in the Koraal Groep, which hosts several facilities for people with handicaps and is situated the south of the Netherlands. He is interested in doing research together with people with a mental handicap and especially with young people with a mild mental handicap and behaviour problems. Many research projects are conducted with other interested colleagues in and outside university.

**Ms Yvonne Vissing, Salem State College, USA****Impact of Housing Distress From A Child's Perspective**

Housing distress disproportionately affects children. Child and family homelessness is now the highest category of all homeless groups in the United States. Data from war zones indicates that children and families are the most common groups of refugees. What is it like to be without adequate, secure housing from a child's perspective? This presentation explores this question from the use of ethnographic interview data from 100 homeless children in the USA. It also explores the use of children as reliable sources for data collection and analysis for both qualitative and quantitative data. It is the position of this paper that housing distressed children may provide more reliable data on the numbers of homeless children in their age cohort, since they are more in touch with the daily reality of housing distressed children than adult reporters. The stigma of homelessness has made children likely to hide their housing problems from adults, who may be regarded either as helpful resources or as potential authorities who could remove them from their families. The meaning of home and housing distress are explored from the use of child focused data.

**Biography**

Yvonne Vissing, PhD, is a Professor of Sociology at Salem State College in Salem, Massachusetts, in the USA. She is in charge of her department's research program and is the coordinator of its Center for Child Studies, which she developed. An author of five books in the area of social pediatrics, she is an active researcher who seeks to involve children in the research process. Her areas focus on legal rights of children, medical issues, family dynamics, and social problems that impact children.



## **Ms Kitty Jurrius, Alexander Foundation, Netherlands**

### **Perspective taking through PAR with youth**

- Does the involvement of youth in research lead to development of perspective taking skills?
- Can these skills be recognized in the interviews with youngsters that participated?
- Are there differences between young people in the development of perspective taking skills through participating in PAR?
- What are the chances young people will continue using perspective taking skills after having participated in PAR with youth?

These, and other questions, are discussed in the article 'Perspective taking through PAR with youth'. The article focuses on the results of research on the quality of Participatory Action Research with youth. Young people interviewed mentioned several skills they gained through performing research themselves, like communication skills, organizational skills, interview skills and listening comprehension. Noteworthy was that a number of skills were connected to perspective taking.

Perspective taking is generally seen as an important social skill. Through this skill people are able to take the perspective of other people and to solve their conflicts. There are various theories about how children's perspective taking skills improve. Some theories stress the importance of growing older, while other theories stress the influence of the environment. These second group of theories teach that perspective taking is a skill that young people can learn through, for example, training, games and role-playing. If young people can gain perspective taking skills through participating in PAR, it would be very interesting to explore this further.

This article focuses on the question how perspective taking skills can be recognized in the skills young people say they have gained through participating in PAR. The questions mentioned above will be used to critically discuss the results with those who want to share their own experiences.

### **Biography**

Kitty Jurrius is performing a PhD on the quality of Participatory Action Research with youth and works as project leader/researcher for Stichting Alexander. Stichting Alexander's main aim is to encourage young people to influence the topics and questions on which research and policy are based, and to allow them to take an active part in conducting the subsequent research.

## **Mr Thomas Muller, Child Helpline International, Netherlands**

### **A Call for the Future – Child Participation**

Child Helpline International (CHI) is a membership-based, network organisation launched in 2003 that brings diverse helplines from throughout the world together to share, discuss and form strategies on how to best serve the needs of children on a global level. CHI was founded on the belief that children and young people have rights, and that they alone are the best individuals to identify their problems. While a child's reason for calling may vary, one factor remains the same: a child is asking to be heard, a right that is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC).

When a member helpline assists a child in any region of the world, several steps towards child protection are set in motion: the caller is helped, the helpline builds on its knowledge of child protection, and an infrastructure may be on the road towards broader social change. At the same time, a single phone call made by a child is a first critical step towards adhering to a child participation philosophy. When a child contacts a helpline, s/he is building on a helpline's knowledge. This information, whether as data, a case study or the handling of the call, is used by CHI to develop activities, documents and strategic and organisational documents, like the Connecting to Children which compiles data collected from child helplines across Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

### **Biography**

Thomas Mueller has been working in different sectors of child protection in Germany before put his focus on children's rights in international development. He has managed programs and projects in South America and West Africa and worked for the German Development Cooperation as consultant for child rights networks in East Africa. Currently he manages the European Program of Child Helpline International, which is the global membership network for child helpline services.

## **Ms Margaret Wood, York St John University, United Kingdom**

### **Young People as Researchers**

This session will be concerned with the active involvement of children and young people in their own research as an expression of 'voice'.

At York St John University in the UK we have developed our Young People as Researchers (YPAR) training programme and materials to help young people build and expand their knowledge and skills as researchers. The focus of their research has grown out of those issues and concerns which they say have particular relevance for them and their lives. Through our training programme we have helped young people to plan, carry out and disseminate their own small-scale enquiries. This work has been inspired by that of Mary Kellett and the Open University Children's Research Centre. It has also been informed by my research into the experiences of schools which are undertaking similar work with young people.

This conference session will draw on these experiences and examples of young people's research to examine the contribution of YPAR to student voice and the benefits for young people's learning from engaging in this work. Kellett (2005) refers to research as being a 'whetstone for critical thinking' and through the research process our young researchers have had opportunities to develop their critical thinking skills as well as many other important transferable skills. One of the striking things is the ways in which the young people's research projects have been catalysts for bringing about improvement and change in their schools and communities. This will be explored with particular reference to one school in the London Borough of Lewisham and its own Students as Researchers (STARS) initiative which I have had the pleasure of researching. At this school, STARS is a strategy within Citizenship Education which takes a strong focus on young people bringing about change. It enables young people to identify and research issues they would like to change and to make recommendations with a view to making this happen and thus giving students a more direct stake and role in improvement.

This session will share some examples of young people's research and examine how this can give young people a voice and a means to influence change.

### **Biography**

Dr Margaret Wood is a Senior Lecturer and Head of Programme for the MA in Educational Improvement, Development and Change at York St John University in England. Her particular research interest is in student voice and young people as active researchers.

**Ms Sirene LIM, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore**

**Researching with 4-5-year-olds: Whose voice? Who benefits?**

This is a presentation and discussion of research issues pertaining to a 7 month ethnographic study in a childcare setting within multicultural and globalizing Singapore. The study explored the contemporary peer culture of a group of about 25 preschoolers in a particular childcare setting. The study positioned the children as knowledge producers, social actors, and meaning makers, situating them in spheres of (un)seen powers.

The study's findings revealed their agency and processes of socialization into both institutional as well as peer cultures. Critical and postcolonial theories were used to frame the study. Critical ethnography provided the methodological framework, with participant observations and conversations as key data generation methods. Individual children were also given the choice to use a digital camera to document whatever they wished outside the childcare setting. Their photographs were then used in individual researcher-child conversations.

A major methodological challenge involved the presentation of "sensitive" data that may place individual children (and families) in a disadvantaged position as they could easily be identified by adult staff members and parents reading the study's reports, in spite of pseudonyms. Potentially sensitive data included children's negative behaviors at the childcare, and significant familial medical history such as AIDS that influenced a particular child's agency. Ultimately, the study included a section describing a composite child character, in order to present issues for the discussion of pedagogy and future research. Such a presentation of research findings raises the questions of, "who benefits from the research?" and "whose voice is heard?"

This presentation will also discuss the political nature of presenting research findings so as to speak to multiple audiences in ways that would not create a dis-service to groups of teachers, children and families.

**Biography**

Sirene's interests include the exploration of children's peer cultures, globalization and education, and social justice issues in curriculum design and teacher preparation. She is currently an Assistant Professor at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University in Singapore.

**Ms Susanne Vogl, Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt,  
Lehrstuhl für Soziologie und empirische Sozialforschung, Germany**

**Focus Groups with Children**

Children are not little adults. They have their own view of things. So adults are not necessarily adequate informants about attitudes, relevancies, not even activities (especially when children grow older) of (their) children. Therefore, we have to study children themselves to get insights into their lives. Methods of social science are developed assuming subjects or participants are adults. But since children have different abilities and needs we have to ask: What are the consequences for studies dealing with the world of children? How can we as researchers hear them? One possible way is to employ focus groups. But then: What are the peculiarities employing focus group with children? And subsequently: How can we enhance their potential of participation? And how can we improve data quality by adapting the method to the abilities of children?

These are the key questions of the study described. Trying to answer them we conducted focus groups with children and adolescents of the first, third, fifth, seventh and ninth grade dealing with comparable topics and ways of asking questions. The analysis following referred to different levels of activities during the focus groups, mainly specifics of group interaction, procedural aspects and participant roles as well as their verbal, interactive and cognitive abilities. Furthermore, to attain a comprehensive picture of the focus groups we did not only consider respective qualitative (e.g. evaluation of the content of the statements) but also quantitative aspects (e.g. amount of words used or number of interactions in social-emotional or task oriented areas as well as the direction of those interaction) for analysis. Together these factors were used to draw conclusions regarding cognitive, social and verbal abilities of children in focus group situations. The consequences for the method as well as the resulting advantages and disadvantages are explored in this paper. The age of the children (six to fifteen years) served as the central variable. In the end different abilities and needs of each age group could be pointed out and consequences for feasibility of focus groups with children and potential gain in insights through them are discussed.

**Biography**

Susanne Vogl did her degree in Sociology at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany. After that she received a scholarship of the Maximilian-Bickhoff-Foundation for her PhD. Her dissertation is on a methodological comparison between interviewing children face-to-face and on the telephone. Main concerns are children's abilities and ways of methodological adjustment to those. Since 2006 she works as a research associate at the Department of Sociology at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany. Her key activities are in areas of social science research methods and deviant behavior.

## **Ms Anne Holdik and Esther Burgard, SOS Children's Villages Hermann Gmeiner Academy, Austria**

### **Becoming Independent – Youth's reflection on fledging:**

#### **Workshop for Youths about Autonomy and Independence**

To set off for an independent life there are a few qualities young people should be equipped with, for example coping with difficulties, developing positive self-esteem etc..

What do youths wish and expect from youth care for being prepared for an independent life? Who can give a helping hand? Within the project "Youth in Care" we analyze the voices of youth being part of different SOS-programs. We try to filter out their needs and wishes, to be able to provide a better support. We not only want to talk to SOS youth, but also to youth living in their origin families, and therefore would like to invite you to this discussion group.

In our workshop we aim on the one hand at defining autonomy and independence, from youth perspective. What does "independence" mean to you? Which are important areas that should be considered while evaluating one's capabilities to successfully find the way to independence? What are indicators for "being independent"? On the other hand we want to discuss examples in everyday life situations: in which areas of life are you already independent? Where do you still need help? What are your expectations and difficulties in becoming independent? Which were situations or tasks in your life that could be successfully solved?

We prepared some role-plays and group-discussions for you that should help finding out what actually independence means and in which situations could possibly be regarded as "key-tasks".

#### **Biography**

Esther Burgard is a psychologist with background in social sciences research and quality management. She forms part of the Research Team at the SOS Kinderdorf Hermann-Gmeiner Academy. Main research interest: Youth in Care, benchmark projects in child care and child participation.

Anne Holdik studies pedagogy in Innsbruck and currently does a placement at SOS Children's Villages.

**Ms Ruth Karner, PROLOKA, Austria****Let's play: Interactive demonstration of methods for workshops with children and adults.**

Can research keep children busy, amused and entertained? Can it be fun and a game? And can this still give them the chance to give us important information? And can this absolutely show results a researcher can use? The answer is simply: Yes!

Working and researching children always should be adapted to their way of experiencing the world. Games and playing can enrich research a lot and can challenge us to develop new tools which encourage the amount of useful outcomes.

This workshop will be a short presentation of a few very effective games, which can be used in a researching process or at a workshop or consultative processes as a tool for researching children. These can be used instead of a questionnaire and you could end having fun trying one out with me.

**Biography**

Student of Education in Innsbruck and Uppsala, theses about „participatory action research“ within projects with teenagers in Tirol; Systemic Coach; Consultant and Moderator of Children and Youth Participation Processes. Part of the managing board of the NGO [www.proloka.org](http://www.proloka.org). proLoka is a project platform and network to exchange knowledge and competences between people, institutions and cultures. This exchange seeks to improve quality of life and personal development of everyone involved in the projects. The exchange of knowledge and competences takes place in form of projects set in different fields. The superior fields at the moment are medicine, culture and civilization, technology and trainings.

Next to this a lot of practical experience as head of a social pedagogic department. Person in charge for adventure playgrounds, social pedagogic freetimeprograms, playground participation projects, social perspective analyses, play busses, etc. at the “Kinderfreunde Oberösterreich”(for 7 years).

**Ms Claudia Mödlagl, SOS Children's Villages Hermann Gmeiner Academy, Austria**

**Listening to Children: Challenges of Child Participation in the Strategy Development of an International Child-Care Organization**

SOS Children's Villages aims at strengthening children's voices all over the world and at applying a child rights-based approach. Beyond the daily practice of child participation in everyday decisions on a local level, children should be involved also on a global level in the overall development of new organizational strategies and internal strategic goals for 2009 to 2016. In the course of this process children were "listened to" in order to adopt the strategic alignment to children's needs and wishes. The experiences and opinions of the organization's beneficiaries are perceived as vital for the further development of its services. Listening to children and youths of its different programs was therefore a necessary step in improving the organization's services.

For this purpose, 600 children (aged 8 to 18 years) from 26 countries, who are living in an SOS Children's Village or are part of an SOS Family Strengthening Program, participated in the project "Listening to Children". The project was focused on getting to know about their thoughts and evaluations regarding the services offered by SOS Children's Villages. Their voice was seen as a 'flashlight' highlighting individual perceptions and feelings. The Listening process should be as participatory as possible and the answers collected should be kept as authentic as possible. The process consisted of three main phases (plus evaluation of the project). In the first phase, the children could choose their preferred themes and appropriate methods to work on the topic. In a shared group process they analyzed their outcomes. Based on 26 country reports, global trends of children's voices were extracted and brought back to the organizational development process. In the second and third phases, the children and youth from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Lebanon, who also participated in the first consultation, were giving input to two tasks again. On a national level, children were working on the use of their outcomes and recommendations for the local SOS work, with the focus of improving the living conditions of children. The results have been reported back to the management and were taken into consideration in the ongoing strategic development process.

**Biography**

Claudia Mödlagl is clinical and health psychologist and forms part of the Research Team at the SOS Kinderdorf Hermann-Gmeiner Academy. She was part of the project team for "Listening to Children".



## **Ms Anne Holdik and Esther Burgard, SOS Children's Villages Hermann Gmeiner Academy, Austria**

### **Becoming Independent – Youth's reflection on fledging:**

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#### **Biography**

Esther Burgard is a psychologist with background in social sciences research and quality management. She forms part of the Research Team at the SOS Kinderdorf Hermann-Gmeiner Academy. Main research interest: Youth in Care, benchmark projects in child care and child participation.

#### **Biography**

Anne Holdik studies pedagogy in Innsbruck and currently does a placement at SOS children village at the moment.

## Tuesday 11.12.2007

### **Key note: Peter Egg**

#### **Research happens – I have a dream**

Participation and the emancipation of the human race are inseparably bound. Participation aims at forming a society which is characterised by the fact that its members apply discourse as a means of controlling social procedures - a society which has not become deformed, but rather offers equal opportunities to all its members - including children. Participatory Research attempts to reduce general, overall processes of determination in favour of processes of co-determination and supports the individual's right of self determination. It applies a more critical approach towards adaptability and conformity and demands the co-operation of independent individuals instead of encouraging their dependency. Participatory Research aims at a social reform as far as day-to-day democracy and an equal distribution of opportunities are concerned. It presumes that the process of democratization of our society is, as yet, incomplete. The educational theory of participation aims at communicative interaction and active analysis and disclaims dogmatism of individual ideas.

Much has been written about participatory action research. Basically, much change is brought about the moment the aspect of 'participation' meets up with the aspect of 'research'. Participation does not simply happen 'en passe' - 'business as usual' is not possible. It is a decisive turning point in one's own attitude – a crucial turning point in research. This aspect is to be visualized.

Additionally, three participatory research projects will be applied in an attempt to achieve more participation in research in the fields of the arts and social sciences, respectively:

Research process 1: During the last 20 years, I have worked together with approximately 30,000 children in the Tyrol to research their living surroundings, their milieu and their play areas.

Research process 2: Young inhabitants of a Tyrolean valley consider the future of the valley in which they live as far as young people are concerned.

Research process 3: Young participants of an international research project determine their own optimal research setting.

*m16: It is a strange location for such a project  
but it's a new idea and, I believe, a good idea.  
I also think: many people spend their time on the  
toilets to consider their problems and other things...  
(DVDBIBo2b, O`54`ff)*

These three examples are to encourage a re-consideration of the original function of human science research – the fact that human beings examine other human beings in order to produce humane living conditions for them and with them. An overemphasis of the category ‘research’ as opposed to the category ‘participation’ will, therefore, be avoided, in order to prevent participatory research from becoming degraded to a kind of social technology and to prevent the production of purely mechanical thought patterns.

**Biography**

dissertation and doctoral thesis on the topic of participation, lecturer at the University of Innsbruck since 1994, **research projects** at the Institute of Educational, **participatory work with children and young people** since, consultant adviser on the topic of Co-determination of Children and Young People, responsible for the tyrolean governmental strategy to implement child- and youth participation in Tirol

**Ms Clare Goodman, Brunel University, United Kingdom****Disabled children's experiences of hip surgery: how do we find out what children have to say?**

In 2004 the UK government launched The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services or Children's NSF (DoH, 2004a). The concept of child and family-centred practice is fundamental to this NSF, aiming to involve children and families in planning, treatment, and service development (DoH, 2004a). Relationships between services and families are described as partnerships, signifying commitment to move away from the traditional view of professionals as sole experts towards more egalitarian approaches to services and intervention (DoH, 2004b). However, the development of these partnerships is not described explicitly and children and families decision-making involvement is never fully clarified.

In this paper I will discuss an on-going qualitative study aiming to investigate the experiences of children with cerebral palsy and their parents when the child undergoes hip surgery. Following a group of children and their parents from surgery referral to recovery, this study explores the impact of hip surgery upon daily activities and family life from the perspectives of children and parents exploring issues surrounding decision-making and perceptions of disabled children's needs and experiences.

This paper examines the complex ethical and practical considerations to be resolved in order to facilitate disabled children's participation in research. I will also discuss the challenges of gaining access to children with cerebral palsy undergoing hip surgery and the methods adopted in order for disabled children to tell their stories, express their thoughts, feelings and ideas through signs, symbols, pictures and video.

**References**

Department of Health, (2004a) Core Standards - National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services. DoH, London

Department of Health, (2004b) Disabled Children and Young People and those with Complex Health Needs - National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services DoH, London

**Biography**

Clare Goodman qualified as an occupational therapist in 1994 and has worked primarily with children and their families since then. She is currently studying for a PhD at Brunel University in the UK. Her main areas of interest are the experiences of children and their parents when they come into contact with health services, and how occupational therapists communicate and interact with children in particular.

**Mr Werner Reichmann, University of Konstanz, Austria and Ms Sonja Eugen & Ms Bianca Helfer, SOS Children's Village Hermann Gmeiner Academy, Austria**

**Child Protection: Involving Children as Competent Partners in Investigating Their Safety**

In 2005, the international NGO SOS Children's Villages defined a clear need for a global Child Protection Policy which was elaborated by an international team. As a parallel process, strategies to implement the policy in everyday life have been designed to guarantee that the policy paper does not disappear in dusty drawers.

The aim of the research project we want to present is to find out the impact of the Child Protection initiative on the safety of children within SOS Children's Villages. It is our task to develop a tool with child-friendly methods to be used on-site for this impact evaluation.

In 2006 and 2007, a pilot phase was carried out in 28 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. Different approaches such as focus groups with different stakeholders serve to raise awareness for the right of the child to be protected. The overall aim is to ensure that each SOS facility is a secure environment for children. In our presentation we focus on three different but interdependent aspects of our project:

1. Although there are several attempts to operationalize the term "child safety" within the literature of social sciences, the different aspects and dimensions of "child safety" are still not clear at all. Our first step was to find dimensions and indicators for the term "child safety".
2. After finding the theoretical basis for our evaluation project we have to find well-elaborated and appropriate methods to also invite children and young people themselves to find out how safe they feel and are in SOS Children's Villages.
3. This evaluation tool should work in a multi-cultural context (in more than 130 countries all over the world). This is how we organize our activities: We have personally spent some time in SOS Children's Village facilities in Africa and Latin America to find out about cultural-specific problems. The Asian context is considered through a close cooperation with a partner in Bangladesh. We have had a close look at existing projects related to our topic, mainly studying literature. We closely collaborate with partners in the different countries. We invite children and young people to participate in this process in order to find out about their own perspective of "safety".

**Biography**

Werner Reichmann is sociologist and works as assistant professor at the University of Konstanz. Before coming to Konstanz in 2007, he taught at the University of Innsbruck, prior to which he was a research assistant at the University of Graz. He studied Sociology, History and Philosophy at the University of Graz where he took a PhD in Sociology in 2006.

## **Mr P.J. Lolichen, The Concerned for Working Children, India**

### **CHILDREN AS RESEARCH PROTAGONISTS AND PARTNERS IN MAINSTREAM GOVERNANCE**

Information is one of the fundamental requisites for meaningful and effective participation. Participation is a process. The strength, impact and sustainability of participatory processes are determined by the nature, level and quality of participation of the parties involved. Children are the most marginalised in any decision making process, even on matters that directly concern them. Examples of children conducting their own research in order to acquire the information they require to enhance their participation are very rare; but when this has happened it has been a very empowering experience for the children concerned. CWC's<sup>1</sup> objective has been to empower children to enable their participation in governance processes. There are numerous examples of members of Bhima Sangha, Makkala Panchayat and Namma Sabha conducting their own research, documenting processes and using the information collected to campaign for issues of their concern at local, national and international official decision making forums. Such research and advocacy by children has successfully enabled the active participation of children in democratic processes as informed citizens who are able to influence decisions at various levels, especially at the level of the local government as well as at national and international policy making. Information management by children enables them to interact effectively and to advocate for their rights with various stakeholders. The process, methods and impacts of the above will be discussed with real life examples. The process of how children can be enabled to conduct their own research will be discussed. As also the implications of children as owners and users of information. Ethical questions of research by children will be outlined and adult roles explored. Critical issues such as ownership of information and right over use of information in research done by children will also be discussed. The discussion will also highlight the need for enabling the setting up of mainstream structures for children's political participation and linking them to adult structures and the impact of such mainstream participation.

#### **Biography**

Lolichen is currently an Assistant Director – Research at The Concerned for Working Children, India. Over the last 12 years, he has been engaged in enabling children to do their own research, as research protagonists, in India. He is a recipient of MacArthur Fellowship for Leadership Development (03-05) for a project enabling youth to develop and use materials and tools on their sexuality and reproductive rights. Publications: "Taking a Right Turn: Children Lead the Way in Research", "Children and their Research: A Process Document", "Children as Informed Participants in Governance".

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<sup>1</sup> CWC is a secular, democratic, national, private development agency working in partnership with working children, their communities, and local governments to implement viable, comprehensive, sustainable, and appropriate solutions. ([www.workingchild.org](http://www.workingchild.org))

## **Ms Sue Lyle & Ms Aileen Brindley, Swansea Institute of Higher Education, United Kingdom**

### **Listening to pupil voice: the experiences of teachers working with ten year old pupils in South Wales, UK.**

Aileen carried out an action research MA dissertation on listening to pupil voice. During the year she continuously developed methods for consulting pupils and reflected on the process of involving pupils and the ethical implications. On completion of her dissertation, Aileen was granted a six-week sabbatical to become a teacher research fellow in the HEI. During this time she visited the classrooms of six year 5 (aged 10) teachers from the local cluster group of primary schools to find out how they took account of pupil voice. Prior to her visits pupils completed questionnaires on their views of themselves as learners and how they preferred to learn. Following observation of two lessons and interviews with a sample of pupils, Aileen engaged in professional dialogue with each of the teachers. Aileen then prepared suggestions for intervention to increase pupil voice based on work developed with her own class for her MA work. She returned for a second visit to observe and discuss the impact on the teachers and pupils. This year the teachers have formed a network to work together to develop more ways of accessing pupil voice. Pupils will visit each other's school and discuss their experiences of being pupils. These experiences of promoting pupil voice will be shared through presentation of a critical dialogue between Sue, Aileen's sabbatical tutor, and Aileen.

#### **Biography**

Aileen Brindley has over 25 years experience as a primary school teacher. Last year she completed her MA dissertation on pupil voice. Following this she had a 6 week sabbatical as a Teacher Research Fellow at Swansea Institute of Higher Education and extended her work on pupil voice to five other teachers in her local group of primary schools. She is now beginning her PhD and wishes to pursue her interest in involving pupils in her research.

#### **Biography**

Sue Lyle is head of Continuing Professional Development at Swansea Institute. Her research is focused on children's collaborative talk. As programme director for the MA (Ed) she supervised Aileen in her MA dissertation and subsequently tutored her during her sabbatical as a Teacher Research Fellow. Sue is accompanying Aileen to this conference to support her as she presents her work.

**Ms Jenni Karlsson, Faculty of Education University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

**On the way to school: children in the post-apartheid city**

In a study of one South African city (Durban/eThekweni) I am exploring city-school spatial relations because in the post-apartheid era there is no governance link between schools and the city in which they are situated. Although I am employing a mixed method approach to data production, my key entry point for this study concerns the trips children make daily between their homes and schools. This is because much of the theoretical literature in English about cities and urban space tends to be silent about children and their lives. Thus, I am researching the daily journeys children make across city space and I have sought to involve 20 children from five schools in the study through photo-voice and map-drawing methods.

In this paper I will discuss methodological issues such as the limitations I experienced in researching across culture, language and class, and how I addressed the ethical issues of confidentiality, anonymity and representation specifically related to the use of images and accompanying text. I will also argue that the photo exhibition is a social space that can extend children's participation in research and provide levels of accountability to them, their care-givers and schools, but which needs to ensure their protection.



**Ms Vicky Fraizer-Morris, Birmingham Association of Youth Clubs  
(bayc), United Kingdom**

**Just Ask!....you'll see our ability**

Just Ask! is a project involving a wide range of young people who want to create volunteering opportunities for people with disabilities. We want to challenge the stereotypes such as 'disabled' and get society to "see our ability" rather than just presume what we can and can't do. We have been doing this through an action research approach which has enabled us to tell our stories and journeys and learn and grow with the process. Just Ask! is also committed to working for the future and supporting and creating opportunities other young people with a variety skills and talents, focussing on their abilities and talents rather than their disabilities because we believe that there is no such thing as a disabled person, it is actually society that is disabling itself by not supporting young people and seeing all that they have to offer.

To find out more Just Ask!

**Ms Debbie Kramer-Roy, Brunel University, United Kingdom**

This presentation describes how children are actively involved in a Participatory Action Research project studying the support needs of Pakistani families with disabled children in the UK. These families form one of the most disadvantaged sections of the British society as they face an array of challenges relating to poverty, ethnicity, religion and disability. Previous research has shown that Pakistani disabled children and their carers find great difficulty in gaining sufficient support from their families, communities and services. This project not only seeks to clarify why this is so, but also to explore how this situation could be improved.

In this project all members of the family take an active role. In the exploratory phase children – disabled children and their siblings – expressed their ideas and views through making time-lines, drawing pictures and taking photographs, as well as interviews based on these activities. The children's ideas emerging from this process were incorporated in their family's stories from which research themes were drawn.

After this, separate groups of men, women and children were formed, to focus on the themes / issues most relevant to them, in action research cycles of planning, acting and reflecting. The children's group consists of the siblings of the disabled children. They work together using creative and interactive methods, seeking to resolve issues within their families and community.

The children will share the outcomes of their research informally with their own families and in a more structured way in meetings where men, women and children's groups give and receive feedback on their results. At the end of the project the children will also be encouraged to actively participate in dissemination to local statutory and voluntary sector services.

The presentation will report on the progress of the project so far, illustrated by slides showing the children's products and activities.

**Biography**

Debbie graduated as an occupational therapist in 1989 in the Netherlands and has worked mainly in England and Pakistan since then. Debbie has fulfilled roles in occupational therapy, community development, school health education, teacher education, project planning and evaluation and participatory research. Debbie also has an MA in Education and International Development (Institute of Education, London) and is currently a PhD candidate at Brunel University West London.

**Ms Maggie McCutcheon, University of Bedfordshire, United Kingdom**

The participation of children and young people in public decision-making in the UK is developing apace. Developments are in response to legislation (Children Act 2004) and policy requirements (Every Child Matters, 2003) and also build on worldwide academic discussions highlighting the importance of the centrality of children in making decisions that affect their communities and their lives. UK studies point to a lack of outcome evidence in terms of children's participation and call for robust evaluative research in this area.

This presentation will describe an action research study with a group of children and young people. The aim of the study is to investigate the extent to which children and young people influence decision-making in Luton (including resource allocation) evaluate their experience of participation and examine the effects of participation in the medium term. The Children and Young People's Partnership in Luton have developed a participation strategy and the study will evaluate and influence its implementation through the action research process over a three year period.

The young researchers reflect the diversity of ethnicity in the area and include children with disabilities, those looked after by the local authority and from disadvantaged areas. The presentation will highlight methodological techniques used to work with young researchers and discuss difficulties in the application of research processes in this ambitious study.

**Biography**

I am a senior lecturer in the department of Applied Social Studies at the University of Bedfordshire and teach across several undergraduate degree programmes. Previously I was a research fellow with the National Evaluation of the children's Fund at Birmingham University.

My professional training is as a mental health nurse and Family Therapist and I have worked for the NHS as a practitioner and manager in public health and for local authorities in community development and neighbourhood management.

Teaching interests include evidence based practice and policy and the developments around the new integrated children's services. I have lead responsibility within the department for the development of courses in this area.

Research and publications to date mainly focus on teenage mothers, health inequalities, community development/ participation and social capital.

Current PhD research examines interests children's participation, power sharing and the governmental modernisation agenda through the lens of the developing Children's Trusts.

I live in Northampton and am a non-executive Director of the Northamptonshire Primary Care Trust.

**Mr Oscar Germes, SOS Children's Villages Hermann Gmeiner Academy, Austria**

**Storytelling as a narrative method for the development of quality standards in out-of-home child care**

After three years of research and development, Quality4Children, a joint project of SOS Children's Villages, the International Foster Care Organisation (IFCO) and the Fédération Internationale des Communautés Educatives (FICE), have developed quality standards for out-of-home child care in Europe.

The Quality4Children steering group and the group developing the standards included young adults with personal experience in out-of-home care; all were coming from nine different European countries. The project had national teams (many of them had young members) in 32 European countries supporting the project in the research, development and promotion of the standards.

Base for the Quality4Children standards were the experiences and expectations as narrated by persons directly involved in the out-of-home child care.

Storytelling is a method for the construction of stories about one's experiences within an organizational setting. It is applied for filtering out and documenting the background of significant events. Storytelling is the conscious use of stories, of narration and hearing. This method was selected for collecting stories of good practices in the out-of-home child care.

The target groups were children without parental care, biological and foster families, caregivers, social workers and investigators. Half of the 250 conducted interviewees were children and/or youth with personal experience in out-of-home child care coming from 26 European countries.

In this workshop, the storytelling method and its five components (Planning, Interview, Extracting, Formulating and Validating) will be thoroughly presented using practical exercises.

If required, a second workshop dealing with the use of the results for developing the Q4C Standards may also be presented.

**Biography**

Master of Arts in Political Sciences by the University of Innsbruck. Mr Germes Castro is since 2005 member of the quality assurance department of the SOS Children's Villages Hermann-Gmeiner Academy. Tasks: Storytelling, and development of quality standards.

**Mr Andy Simpson, Birmingham Association of Youth Clubs (bayc),  
United Kingdom****Young People Using Action Research to Tell Their Stories**

This workshop highlights the degree to which action research with and by young people can facilitate an alternative way to engage them in dialogue relating to their own lived experience and well being.

One struggles to find examples of young people taking ownership of the research process. It is my contention that we need to get involved in doing research with young people or better still supporting and training young people to carry out research by themselves; discussing, preparing, planning, collating/analysing their results and presenting their findings in their own way. The challenge is to explore how young people can be supported to engage meaningfully in the research process. As researchers and practitioners our work influences actions and policies at every level; the impact on young people can be immense. I feel there is a need to shift the existing research paradigm on young people, facilitating an alternative way to inform dialogue on issues and policies that influence their lives.

The aim of this project is to work with young people engaging them in an action research process as a way to facilitate young people's engagement in local decision-making processes, and to explore how this approach can be effective in a range of settings and communities with differing agendas.

## **Ms Fiet Van Beek and Ms Jorien Meerdink, WESP, Netherlands**

### **Listening to children as a basis for quality**

Children should be listened to more often and the opinion of children should be used more frequently to improve certain matters. This is the opinion as well as the mission of WESP, a research bureau from The Netherlands working with and for children, in education and youth care. Children were interviewed by researchers on their opinion and experience and children did research themselves by interviewing other children. Interviews with children from 4 years up were typed out verbatim and then analyzed. This provided a lot of information on what children think important in education and youth care.

Based on their experiences and opinions, quality criteria can be established. These criteria can be used to improve the care or education offered to these children or to make other forms of care or education available to them. What makes this work method so special is that it is transferred to professionals who work with children every day. This means that the ideas and the opinions of the children are being used by schools and youth care institutions to make improvements.

In this interactive workshop we will first present the most relevant results. Next, the participants will be trained in the 5 step interview model we have developed, and in transferring the results into quality criteria.

### **Biography**

Twenty years ago, Jorien Meerdink (1959) founded WESP, a research bureau directed at the promoting of listening to children and adolescents. Her main concern lies in the educational field.

Fiet van Beek (1959) is department director of WESP. Her main concern is with children and adolescents that, due to problems at home, make use of youth care. They both have published extensively.

More information: [www.wespweb.nl](http://www.wespweb.nl)

**Ms Hannah Smith, Applied Social and Community Studies, Liverpool  
John Moores University, United Kingdom**

**The Challenges of Conducting Research with Young People: Evidence from the Liverpool  
Longitudinal Smoking Study**

Hannah Smith, Alexandra Barlow, Susan Woods, Danielle Smith, Alison Wainwright and  
Jane Springett Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool, UK

Studying risk taking behaviour in young people presents many methodological and practical challenges, requiring longitudinal, prospective and qualitative research to fully explore the social, cultural, economical and historical factors that shape children's lives. Taken from challenges experienced throughout the secondary school phase of the Liverpool Longitudinal Smoking Study (LLSS), the complex approach to methodologies, evolution of methods, and issues surrounding recruitment, arrangement and implementation of data collection is reviewed. The LLSS was established to explore children's attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and intentions towards smoking, and track how these perspectives change over time, to understand why young people smoke. Focusing specifically on the secondary school phase, the LLSS annually collected data from a cohort of approximately 250 pupils, aged 12 through to 16. A multi-method approach was adopted, incorporating a wide range of tools to tackle the complexity of smoking research, using innovative ways of collecting data. Both quantitative surveys and qualitative exercises were implemented in triangulation, using participatory tools and methods that mirrored classroom tasks. Moving beyond simple survey techniques, we used descriptive exercises, open-ended questions, focus groups and one-to-one interviews to enhance participation, gather in-depth data, and optimise the quality of responses amongst a difficult population. It was crucial that the research tools reflected the changing cognitive abilities of participants, and were developmentally appropriate for the specific age groups at each phase of the study, whilst also being consistent in the issues they addressed to allow longitudinal analyses. The approach to the data collection, the issues being addressed, and the methods in which to address them required regular review to ensure that the children's perspectives and discourses were appropriately and effectively represented. This paper provides an insight and understanding of working with adolescents, and recommendations for future research; highlighting the advantages of particular methodologies for conducting research with young people.

**Biography**

School of Applied Social and Community Studies, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool, UK Hannah Smith has worked as a Research Assistant on the Liverpool Longitudinal Smoking Study since 2005. Masters degree in Sport Science at Loughborough University in 2004; currently undertaking a PhD at Staffordshire University in the field of physical activity and children's health. Research interests: children and public health, particularly relating to the topics of smoking and physical activity behaviors.

**Ms Yvonne Vissing, Salem State College, USA****Listening To Children in Divorce and Custody Cases**

Divorce is a common experience that may affect as many as half of all children in a community. While it has become a normative experience, there is considerable variation across cultures about the role children should play in decision making about their place in the family. This research focuses upon the role that children play in legal proceedings regarding decisions about custody and visitation. The author is a USA New Hampshire Superior Court appointed trained Guardian ad Litem who has worked with about a hundred children to determine appropriate custody placements. Relying on a family systems data collection design, children have played a major role in the decisions that this researcher has made regarding custody and visitation. However, courts vary significantly in how much credence they will place on the child's data. For instance, Scandinavian courts seem to provide children with a more active presence in the decisions that the courts render about divorce placements. Questions about when is a child able to decide his or her placement are important, as well as the reliability of their reports. The way data is collected in legal settings and how it is used are important methodological issues that have broad research ramifications.

**Biography**

Yvonne Vissing, PhD, is a Professor of Sociology at Salem State College in Salem, Massachusetts, in the USA. She is in charge of her department's research program and is the coordinator of its Center for Child Studies, which she developed. An author of five books in the area of social pediatrics, she is an active researcher who seeks to involve



**Wednesday 12.12.2007****YOUTH'S Morning****Ms Hannah Minty, Connexions Bedfordshire and Luton, United Kingdom**

Connexions is working with a group of young people who have made a good practice, research pack for youth work professionals on how to engage and consult with young people. There are many national guidelines, derived from research in the United Kingdom written by professionals, but nothing written by young people.

Connexions is an organisation that works with young people, aged 13 – 19, giving them advice on finding education, employment or training. Connexions has been set up with the help of young people, for young people, who have a real say in how the service is run and developed in the future.

We have undertaken a youth-led research project, and met with them regularly to devise a resource pack for use by professionals, which includes a DVD, (written, produced, edited and starring the young people themselves) and also written guidelines from the young people. We have also included our Youth Charter in the pack, which outlines what young people expect from their key worker.

Through this project the young people have learnt new communication skills, are building their confidence, working as a team, planning projects, working with film companies and design agencies and applying for funding. When we made the DVD as part of the resource pack, the young people have learnt storyboarding, scripting, filming, acting, directing and editing our own film too. All of these skills will help them in their adult lives, and this type of research and learning is new, innovative and fun!

The young people will run a workshop on their findings, explain their methodology for this project, show their DVD and give some helpful tips to youth work professionals on the best way to engage and consult with them.

**Akademisches Gymnasium Innsbruck (Austria)****Muslims in Austria**

The members of the presenting group seek to present the situation of young Muslims in Austria and want to show the audience how many different opinions there are.

The presentation follows several main questions:

- headscarves or not!?
- young Muslims

- integration
- facts
- asylum
- suggestions for improvement, etc.

The group will use different methods to present the results: a role-play sketch, interviews (with people of different ages and social positions), a power-point presentation (to present the headlines), active involvement of the audience and perhaps a movie about the daily life of a Muslim teenager.

### **Young People and Politics**

The presentation contains facts about the interest of young people in Politics, an opinion-poll and of course the group's personal thoughts and visions. In addition to that, the group will talk about the unemployment rate of young people. They have a lot of information and will present interesting topical news. Furthermore, they will act out a short sketch to make clear their concern and will present the audience with a short summary of an interview with the councilwoman of Innsbruck, Mag.C.Oppitz-Plörer.

### **Environmental Problems**

The group that has been working on this topic will talk about the role of children and young people in the current environmental situation. The topics dealt with are:

- a survey on climate change and the difference in opinions between teenagers and adults
- parents' influence - proper environmental education
- "Klara Jay" - a movie showing how easy it could be to save our planet
- wishes and suggestions

### **The Ideal of Beauty**

Another is currently working on the topic "the Ideal of Beauty" and will address the following themes during the conference:

- we all know how people want to look like today: tall and skinny, slim, etc. - but do you know what it was like in the past?
- the results of two questionnaires distributed at schools
- An interesting book on the topic is called "The Naked Woman: A Study of the Female Body". The book deals with the beauty of the female body now and in the past.
- Who would know better about the problems of the human body? We asked an aesthetic plastic surgeon in Innsbruck to give us some important information.

- The best way to learn about what people want to look like is to take a look at the latest fashion and the clothes exposed in shopping windows. But what would a woman (or a man) look like if they had the BMI of a display dummy?

During the whole presentation, pictures on posters will illustrate how hard it is to live up to all the ideals of beauty.

## Sports

The group who is working on this topic will deal with the following topics:

- Offering of sports in Innsbruck (important sporthalls, nordpark, etc.) and what people would change.
- Questionnaire about sports (e.g. which sport?, how often?)
- Comparison of skiing and snowboarding
- A short summary of famous sportsmen and -women in Innsbruck

## Westfield Community Technology College

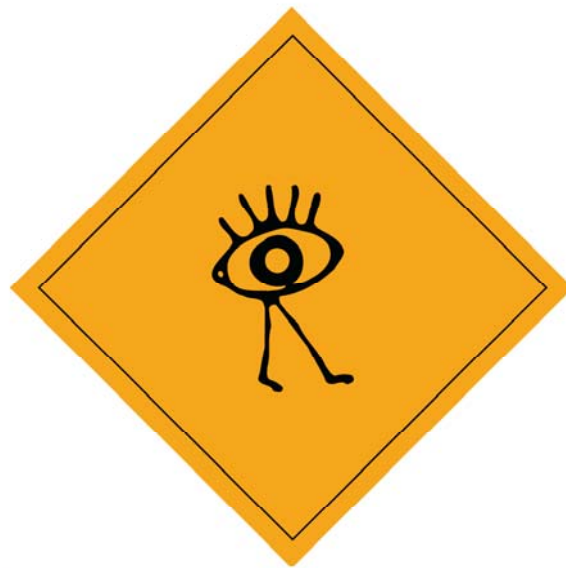
Westfield Community Technology College has 1150 mixed-ability 11 – 19 year old students who come from the local town and neighbouring districts in a disadvantaged area of England. As part of the Hertfordshire Participation Pilot two groups of students had the opportunity to develop their social research skills and lead their peers in research engagement. The four young people attending the conference are presenting the outcomes of their small-scale research.

**Marsila Gashi** - 'Learning and Behaviour Research', a project on how pupils view their learning and how behaviour affects their learning. A sample of Year 8 students were used for this project.

**Lori Bennett** - 'Breaktimes', a project on what pupils think about their breaktimes and what they do during them. A wide range of age groups were used for this project.

**Josh Gill** - 'Teachers view of behaviour' - This questionnaire based project was sent to all Westfield staff with a view to find out exactly how teachers feel about the behaviour of Westfield pupils and how it affects their teaching and the pupils' learning.

**Rachel Sadie** - 'The classrooms at Westfield' This photographic based project shows how the learning environment can affect pupils' attitude to learning.



**ATTENTION!**

Active Researchers crossing  
the way to knowledge



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